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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/799,452	03/12/2004	Manabu Akita	082418-000400US	7708

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EXAMINER

COBURN, CORBETT B

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3714

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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09/14/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No. **10/799,452**

Applicant(s)

AKITA, MANABU

Examiner

Corbett B. Coburn

Art Unit

3714

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12 March 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 6/14/04, 8/23/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to because the drawings are covered in spots. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

2. Claims 1 & 6-8 are objected to because of the following informalities: it contains a limitation in quotes. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claim 7 is drawn to a computer program *per se* & is not patentable.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant couches the invention in terms of parts or units that “can be” connected or moved or operated, etc. Applicant never affirmatively claims that these parts or units actually do anything at all.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 1-3 & 5-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Thorner et al. (US Patent Number 6,422,941).

Claim 1, 6-8: Thorner teaches a connection unit, a storage unit, a reception unit, a generation unit, and a sending unit. (Fig 2) The connection unit can be communicably connected to a controller (540) having a lever that can be moved along a predetermined route, and which sends status information specifying a current position of the lever and receives instruction information specifying a repulsive force to be applied to the lever –

this is how force feedback controllers work. The storage unit pre-stores repulsive force information specifying a repulsive force to be applied to a lever, in association with a game status and a position of a lever. (figs 14 & 15) The reception unit (110) receives status information from said controller via said connection unit. The generation unit acquires the repulsive force information pre-stored in association with a current game status and a position of a lever specified by the received status information, and generates instruction information specifying a repulsive force specified by the acquired repulsive force information (Figs 14 & 15). The sending unit sends the instruction information generated by said generation unit to said controller via said connection unit.

Claim 2: Thorner teaches that the generation unit designates as the instruction information, a value obtained by heightening or lowering the repulsive force specified by the acquired repulsive force information in a predetermined cycle or randomly. In Col 16, Thorner describes a crash event. The repulsive force (specified by the CRASH MAGNITUDE parameter) is modified according to a predetermined cycle based on the CRASH HOLD & CRASH FADEOUT values.

Claim 3: Videogame unit (102) is a calculation unit and a display unit. The storage unit further pre-stores driving force information specifying a driving force in association with a game status and a position of a lever. The calculation unit calculates acceleration of an object moving in a virtual world, based on a driving force specified by the driving force information pre-stored in association with a current game status and the position of the lever specified by the received status information; and said display unit moves the object in the virtual world at the calculated acceleration, and displays the object on a screen at a

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position reached by moving. Thorner teaches using the system in a car simulation (Fig 26C).

Claim 5: Thorner teaches an audio unit, wherein: said storage unit further pre-stores audio information in association with a game status and a position of a lever; and the audio unit reproduces the audio information pre-stored in association with a current game status and the position of the lever specified by the received status information. (Fig 12)

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thorner as applied to the claims above in view of Simonelli (US Patent Number 4,817,948).

Claim 4: Thorner teaches the invention substantially as claimed, but fails to teach that the display unit displays on the screen, the virtual world as viewed from the position of the moved object (i.e., in first person). This is a matter of design choice and many, if not most, car games depict the world as seen through the windshield of the car. Simonelli teaches such a game (Fig 2). This heightens the sense of realism by allowing the driver to feel as if he is actually in the car. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified Thorner in view of Simonelli to

display the virtual world as viewed from the position of the moved object in order to heighten the sense of realism.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Corbett B. Coburn whose telephone number is (571) 272-4447. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-5:30, Monday-Friday, alternate Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Pezzuto can be reached on (571) 272-6996. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Corbett B. Coburn/
Primary Examiner
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